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Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes

True Potato Seed Statement

Submitted by the secretariat

The following document is submitted to the Working Party for adoption as the position of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes on True Potato Seed. It is prepared according to ECE/CTCS/2017/10 section II c and ECE/CTCS/2018/2 section VII a.

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The position of the Specialized Section on True Potato Seed

- Currently commercial trading of propagative material of potatoes for the purpose of commercial planting is through the marketing of seed potato tubers. Small volumes of potatoes are also traded as microplants and mini/microtubers, particularly early-generation material intended for further multiplication or for the purposes of moving high-health status potato propagative material between territories. Thus, the material being marketed is clonally propagated potatoes where the progeny is genetically identical to the preceding generation. The UNECE standard covers this trade.
- Trade in True Potato Seed (TPS), also known as botanical seed, has been limited due to non-uniformity of the progeny crops derived from TPS. However, in recent years several plant breeding companies are advancing knowledge and techniques in the production of TPS which provides for much more uniform progeny. This has culminated in the first-ever F1 hybrid potato variety 'Oliver' being granted plant breeder's rights in the Netherlands in 2017.
- In countries with a well-established potato industry, tubers are the established method of trade in propagative material. However, the UNECE Specialized Section recognizes the potential merits of marketing TPS to growers outside the established potato supply chains whose production is based on horticultural methods,
- The UNECE standard does not currently cover TPS within its scope and the Specialized Section will consider whether and how to bring the trade of TPS within the scope of the standard in its future work programme.